

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LABOR SUMMIT IN MAR DEL PLATA

1. SUMMARY. CGT AND 62 ORGANIZATIONS LEADERS HELD THREE-DAY LONG LABOR SUMMIT TO PLAN STRATEGY TO COUNTERACT ITS APPARENT EXCLUSION FROM PRESIDENTIAL INNER COUNCIL. NO CONCRETE INFORMATION ON PLANS WAS RELEASED, BUT LABOR DISGUST WITH TURN OF EVENTS WAS MANIFESTLY EVIDENT. MANY LABOR DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN SHELVED AS LEADERS AND GROUPS ARE APPARENTLY JOINING FORCES TO CONFRONT RESURGENCE OF LOPEZREGUISMO. SALARY ISSUE NOW FACTOR IN POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. A GRUELING, THREE-DAY-LONG LABOR SUMMIT IN MAR DEL PLATA ENDED ON JANUARY 18 WITHOUT ANY CLEAR INDICATIONS OF WHAT CONCRETE STEPS LABOR WILL TAKE TO COUNTERACT ITS APPARENT LOSS OF INFLUENCE IN PRESIDENTIAL CIRCLES. THE LACK OF OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OR COMMUNIQUE HAS LED TO CONFLICTING REPORTS IN NEWS MEDIA, WHICH HAVE GIVEN FRONT-PAGE, HEADLINE TREATMENT TO THE MEETING. THE ONLY CONCRETE INFORMATION RELEASED BY LABOR LEADERS IS THAT THE CGT EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL MEET ON JANUARY 21 TO SET WAGE INCREASE POSITION. REPORTEDLY, ALTHOUGH UNCONFIRMED, THE 62 ORGANIZATIONS HAS REQUESTED AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT PERON TO PRESENT ITS CASE. SOME PAPERS HAVE OPINED THAT LABOR WILL REQUEST THAT SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER

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DEMARCO AND PRESIDENTIAL TECHNICAL SECRETARY JULIO GONZALEZ

BE DISMISSED, AND THAT INFLUENCE AND ACCESS TO PRESIDENT BY RAUL LASTIRI BE ENDED.

3. DEPITE THE LACK OF ANY OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE, INDIVIDUAL LABOR LEADERS LEFT NO DOUBT OF THEIR DISGUST WITH TURN OF EVENTS. CGT SEC GEN HERRERAS REACTED STRONGLY TO TALK OF " UNION POWER AND SOVIETIZATION IN THE FACTORIES." HE STRESSED THAT LABOR SEEKS ONLY THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE ITS LEGITIMATE ROLE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA AS THE BACKBONE OF THE PERONIST MOVEMENT. HE URGED ALL WORKERS TO MAINTAIN THEIR "UNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH" IN FACE OF THE CURRENT CRISIS. 62 ORGANIZATIONS LEADER LORENZO MIGUEL ECHOED HERRERAS'S SENTIMENTS BY DENYING THAT UNIONIZED WORKERS WERE "SECTARIANS, CLASSISTS OR RACISTS." HE REJECTED ALLEGATIONS THAT LABOR SOUGHT TO IMPOSE "TRADE UNION HEGEMONY," AND STRESSED THAT IT INSISTED ONLY ON "BEING CONSULTED AND HAVING THE PARTICIPATION WHICH IT DESERVES." OTHER, UNNAMED, LABOR LEADERS USED EVEN HARSHER TERMS TO DENOTE THEIR DISGUST WITH WHAT THEY SEE AS A RETURN OF LOPEZRREGUISMO AND THE ATTEMPTED ISOLATION OF LABOR FROM THE HALLS OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

4. LABOR'S POSITION ON THE SALARY QUESTION IS NOW LIKELY TO BECOME AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL WEAPON. PRIOR TO THE CABINET CHANGES, LABOR WAS REPORTEDLY WILLING TO SETTLE FOR AN INCREASE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 15 PERCENT. HOWEVER, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CGT ECONOMIC STUDIES COMMISSION TOLD LABATT THAT PRESIDENTIAL SNUB HAD "OPENED WHOLE NEW BALLGAME." ALL AGREEMENTS, HE SAID, ARE REACHED ON BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL GROUNDS. NOW, THE POLITICAL ASPECT WILL PREDOMINATE, AND LABOR WILL UTILIZE THE BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUE, AS IT DID IN JUNE, 1975, TO FORCE OUT MINECON RODRIGO, TO FORCE AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE IN THE CURRENT SITUATION. THEREFORE, THE SIZE OF THE SALARY INCREASE WILL DEPEND TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THE DEGREE OF ACCOMMODATION THE PRESIDENT IS WILLING TO MAKE IN THE NON-SALARIAL POLITICAL SITUATION.

5. COMMENT. THE PRESIDENTIAL SNUB OF LABOR IN THE CABINET APPOINTMENTS MAY SERVE TO SOLIDIFY LABOR UNITY, WHICH HAD BEEN BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRAGILE. MIGUEL AND HERRERAS MAY BE MENDING THEIR SPLINTERED RELATIONS, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEING, TO JOINTLY CONFRONT THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE POSED BY LASTIRI, GONZALEZ, ET AL. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MIGUEL AND THE LABOR LEGISLATORS "WORKING GROUP" AND THE ANTI-VERTICALISTA PERONIST AFFIRMATION GROUP MAY BE MEOMENTARILY FORGOTTEN IN THE PRESENT DISPUTE. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT MIGUEL AND BA GOV CALABRO MAY PATCH OVER THEIR QUARREL AND ALIGN THEIR FORCES FOR THE BATTLE. ALTHOUGH THE LATTER APPEARS UNLIKELY, THAT IT IS EVEN

SUGGESTED INDICATES THE XTENT TO WHICH LABOR IS SEEKING TO MARSHALL ITS FORCES. AS ONE LABOR LEADER WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS, "AN ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND." ALTHOUGH "SUMMIT" MEETING HAS ENDED, MAJORITY OF LABOR LEADERS ARE REMAINING IN MAR DEL PLATA. ACCORDINGLY, ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO WEDNESDAY CGT MEETING CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED.
BEAL

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